our friends and allies, notably the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Japan. It is unlikely there will be comparable help in defraying the costs of a military action and any subsequent nation-building in Iraq.

Our war aims with Iraq also need clarification. The goal of the U.S. should not be the total disarmament of Iraq, as some appeared to have call for, but the elimination of his weapons of mass destruction. Disarmament implies that Iraq cannot have an army, a proposition no sovereign state is likely to accept. Indeed, Western policy in the region for decades advocated a balance of power, not vacuum of power. The reason to distinguish the elimination of weapons of mass destruction versus total disarmament is more than theoretical. U.S. policy should be based on establishing a strong unitary Iraq with a professional army accountable to democratic forces. As we proceed toward possible invasion, the goal should be to seek the Iraq army to identify with the United States, not Saddam.

The challenge is to make it clear that our goal is more democracy, prosperity, and the uplifting of Iraqi society, one which can lead the Muslim world with a model of modern democracy and prosperity.

Saddam is a rogue leader, but Iraqis are not a rogue people. Care must be taken to distinguish the leadership from the country itself. No country or peoples are intrinsically evil, though individual leaders such as Saddam can clearly be malevolent.

In historical terms, Saddam is a Stalinist. The case for regime change is real, but the prospect of our demolishing Iraqi society or Saddam blowing up his own country's infrastructure—bridges and oil fields—is not a happy one. Perhaps the prospect of such a catastrophe will lead to regime change precipitated internally, which could be the maximum outcome for all.

In Just War theory, the criterion of right authority determines who is to decide whether or not resorting to war is justified.

Reasonable men and women can agree in a ''just war'' context on the moral and legal authority of the President, acting with the express authorization of the Congress of the United States, to initiate a police action to enforce international law.

Likewise, reasonable men and women generally ought to be able to agree on the moral and legal authority of the Security Council to authorize the enforcement of UN resolutions requiring a country to abide by international conventions on weapons of mass destruction.

It should be self-evident that while a country like the United States has an obligation to protect its citizens without a formal UN resolution, it is vastly preferable for American strategy to be based on formal international support.

UN support would impress upon Saddam Hussein that he is not just facing a United States Administration, but the will of the world community. Security Council endorsement would bolster American security by helping make it politically possible for others to join in enforcing international law and by undercutting the legal and moral base of those who might object.

In this context, the President is to be commended for taking the case to the United Nations. He is to be commended for endeavoring to reach out to the world community by deciding that the United States should rejoin UNESCO. He is to be commended for laying out the challenges Iraq poses to the world community and to the region. He is further to be commended to bringing his case to the Congress.

Words matter. Care must be taken in their use. Words lead to processes that sometimes make careful judgments difficult to obtain. At this time, for instance, the case for regime change is powerful. But this does not necessarily mean that urgency for military intervention, even with UN authorization, is compelling. There have been too many instances in history where leaders have boxed themselves in with words, and when actions tied to words may cause, domino fashion, further actions to transpire which might not be contemplated or warranted by the initial statements made.

Utterance restraint is an attribute that has received less attention and less approval than should be the case in statesmanship. In this context, the unintended consequence of describing countries as evil and personalizing strategic doctrines must be recognized.

In Vietnam, for instance, the basis for our engagement stemmed more from a domino theory of decision-making than the more widely discussed domino government-toppling potential. When American presidents make statements, policy decisions can result which lead to actions which may not fit the circumstance in which the statement was originally framed.

More recently, in the Balkans, America got involved after giving a series of warnings that if Serbia didn't go along with the Rambouillet Accord, the United States and NATO would intervene. The United States made threats which were not taken seriously by adversaries which led to intervention that might not have occurred if the warnings weren't made. The decisions to intervene was made in part because of a concern about preserving presidential credibility, and the need to make a particular president's words meaningful, despite the fact that few Americans knew the president had made statements in this arena.

In the case before us it is suggested that authorization for use of force may cause others to act in such a way as to make use of force unnecessary. But the greater problem seems to me to be problem of a leader who pushes for authorization and then faces the question of follow through. The logic is force may not be inevitable but its authorization surely makes a decision for restraint difficult.

There is a thin line between the exercise of superpower responsibility and the prospect of superpower folly. The timing, perhaps more than the substance of this resolution is in doubt. Judgment and timing must go hand in hand. It may have been a mistake back in 1991 not to have pursued Saddam because of our assumption that the Iraqi people would come to their senses and replace him. But that failure to act does not necessarily legitimize assumptions that intervention today can legally be carried out in the context of resolutions both Congress and the UN applied a dozen years ago. The greatest legal case against Saddam relates less to Security Council resolutions than his development of biological weapons which contravene international law and jeopardizes the health of the region.

In general, the criterion of last resort has a common sense interpretation in which it functions as a reminder that the resort to violence must be, to a significant degree, reluctant. It enjoins us to make serious efforts at peaceful resolutions of our political problems before going down the path of war. The term ''peaceful'' is itself open to varied interpretations, but is usually taken to include a comprehensive range of nonviolent methods that may involve ''coercive diplomacy,'' including sanctions of an economic and political character.

The principle of proportionality evaluates the effects or ends of war. In this regard, proportionality is ''counting the costs'' or cost-benefit analysis. In just was theory this principle insists that there be due proportion, that is, less evil following from acting rather than not acting in the manner contemplated. War is not justifiable if it will produce more death and destruction that it prevents. Understood properly, proportion has the potential for overriding just cause.

Although Iraq is clearly a menace, there is little evidence to suggest that it poses a direct and immediate threat to the vital interests of the United States sufficiently grave as to lead to no other credible alternative to war. As former NATO commander General Wesley Clark testified before congress, ''There is nothing that indicates that in the immediate—the next hours—the next days—that there is going to be nuclear missiles put on launch pads to go against our forces or our allies in the region. And so I think there is, based on all the evidence available, sufficient time to work through the diplomacy of this.''

Former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft argued this summer in the Wall Street Journal, that Saddam's strategic objectives appear to be to dominate the Persian Gulf, to control oil from the region, or both. This clearly poses a real threat to U.S. interests. But there is little hard evidence to suggest Saddam has close ties to al-Qaeda, and even less to the 9/11 attacks. Given Saddam's psychology and aspirations, Scowcroft considers it unlikely that he would be willing to risk his investment in weapons of mass destruction by handing them over to terrorists who could use them for their own purposes ''and leave Baghdad as the return address.'' Saddam, Scrowcroft suggests, seeks weapons of mass destruction not to arm terrorists, but to deter us from intervening to block his aggressive designs.

In addition, as of this moment, with current sanctions in place and the Security Council contemplating reintroducing weapons inspectors under existing of new UN resolutions, it cannot credibly be claimed that America or the world have exhausted non-violent alternatives.

I accept in principle that military intervention against Iraq might be considered legitimate law enforcement under just war doctrine. What I do not accept is that it is justified at this time because of the disproportionately horrendous consequences such action may precipitate.

The reason I am doubtful relates less to the risks to American national interests which accompany intervention in the Muslim world, as real and as large as I believe them to be, but principally because of the risks invasion may pose to civilization itself.

As I have listened to various proponents, the efficacy of military intervention is based on the assumption that a cornered tyrant will not initiate the use of weapons of mass destruction, providing the U.S. and others the opportunity to destroy or otherwise seize effective control of such weapons before Baghdad can issue orders to strike.